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ABSTRACT

National and International Conferences on Environmental Education have been held over the last three years. These provide a global perspective that is translated into goals and objectives for environmental education programs in the United States. Emphasis is on the need to educate people to the fact that all mankind shares the earth and that with this realization comes responsibilities on a world-wide scale. The quality of life from a global perspective is described by the four freedoms of the environmental education movement which include participation in recreational activities, survival, self-determination as a species, and freedom from want. This global approach is being incorporated into a K-12 environmental education program through an Experimental Schools (ES) project funded by the National Institute of Education. Background information is given on the development and progress of this program, along with a statement of program goals. (MA)

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PROGRESS TOWARD A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: STRATEGIES TO AFFECT STUDENT AWARENESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Since July 1973 Dr. Richard Peters has been administrator/director of a funded Experimental Schools (ES) project in northern New Hampshire.

The local ES project, one of ten such R & D oriented programs, is funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE) for purposes of instructional program planning - development - implementation - evaluation - revision in rural schools.

The project's Student Environmental Awareness (SEA) program is geared to (K-12) student awareness of and interaction with the total life space; that is, with natural, social, and human phenomena.

BACKGROUND

In October 1976 The Alliance for Environmental Education, in conjunction with Unesco, conducted The North American Regional Seminar on Environmental Education in St. Louis Missouri. The goal of this four-day conference was to bring together leaders in business, industry, education and government for the purpose of developing environmental education policy guidelines for the United States and Canada.

The first Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education was held in Tbilisi, USSR from October 14 through 26, 1977. The conference was sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) in cooperation with the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). The purpose of the meeting was to formulate recommendations for action which might be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels for the promotion and development of environmental education.

The 1978 National Leadership Conference on Environmental Education was held in Washington, DC from March 28 through 30th. The conference was designed as a part of the continuing

development and implementation of environmental education.

PERSPECTIVE

Environmental education is defined as a holistic approach to the study of the nature, the character and the interrelationship(s) among the several natural environments and social environments, as well as the human resources of a given geographic region.[1]

Traditionally, environmental education programs are nationalistic in nature and citizenship education oriented in content.

Across the United States, environmental education programs and projects strive to help learners;

1. discover what effect(s) their decisions and actions have upon others and themselves;
2. develop personal environmental ethics;
3. increase knowledge of the natural environment(s);
4. better understand the impact of humans on the environment(s);

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[1]Richard Peters, "The New Spirit of St. Louis," Environmental Education Report, December/January 1977, pg. 11.

5. develop conscious conservation and management of finite resources attitudes;
6. promote the concept of perceptual self-denial;
7. develop understanding of ecological relationships, environmental problems, and their alternative solution;
8. study problems, investigate alternative solutions, make decisions, and actively work for solution implementation;
9. develop social attitudes and values; and
10. promote activism for good citizenship.[2]

Ultimately world wide environmental education programs and related activities should strive to create a climate of *oneness*; that is, awareness of and social responsibility for Mother Earth as a totality. Concern should be paid to investigations, decision making, and overt actions which

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[2]Reference to Environmental Education Information Report: A Directory of Projects and Programs in EE (third edition) ERIC Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education, The Ohio State University, February 1975.

culminate in the betterment of all humans.

The global goals of EE should stress and integrate:

.content acquisition and application;

.skills development and application;

.values clarification; and

.attitudes and behavior modification.

Direct participation, by the world's collective citizenry, in the processes of environmental protection and stewardship is crucial to the successful eradication of natural, social, and human ills.

A global perspective of the quality of life space environments should be based upon what this author has described and labeled to be the *four freedoms* of the environmental education movement.

1. The freedom of everyone to participate in recreational activities and to enjoy clean environments;
2. The freedom to survive, as individual and as a collective totality, within natural and social environments;

3. The freedom of self-determination as a species, i.e., to plan the future by protecting the environment today; and

4. The freedom from want; freedom from a scarcity of clean air, clean water, food and adequate living space.

As a result of worldwide exposure to and direct involvement with environmental education programs today's youth, tomorrow's leaders, better perceive the need to conserve the world's finite resources, to protect the quality of human and non-human life in the far corners of the world, to manage wisely the worldwide utilization of valuable human resources, to plan future land use policies - worldwide, to control human population growth and distribution, and to participate actively in the continuous campaign to improve human life styles in social environments around the world.

While it is desirable to promote ecological awareness and life space quality activism on the local/county/state/regional/national level(s), there must be developed, among

all of earth's human inhabitants, concern for and attention paid to global issues and problems which, in time, have effect upon all mankind. Remember, the world is but one giant ecosystem made up of several interrelated and interacting parts which work together in such manner that change in one affects all other parts and the whole.

In the context of a more-global awareness and perspective men need to learn from each other's experiences; both successes and failures.

As stated before, by many, all mankind shares the earth. There is no escaping the effects and influences of other nations, other people, and foreign ecological problems upon our daily domestic lives. What happens to one human today in regard to life space qualities will have paramount effect upon other humans -- tomorrow. Unlike man's artificial segmentation of the earth's surface; namely, nation states, nature treats its earth as a whole; a totality of living and non-living entities. To ignore a ecological problem of the world simply because it does not exist in one's own

backyard can no longer be tolerated. Action must be taken, worldwide, by all nations when and where problems are found to exist. Our perceptions of *the world* must be broadened, through exposure and experience(s), to encompass the concept of wholeness. Via global oriented EE programs we must -- we can -- begin to identify issues of mutual concern and strive to successfully achieve quality life space environments for all the earth's human and non-human phenomena.

STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Since July 1973 the NH School Supervisory Union 58 Experimental Schools (ES) project, funded by the National Institute of Education, has been involved in the on-going process of K-12 environmental education program planning - development - implementation - evaluation - revision - process documentation and monitoring - and related teacher in-service training.

Locally, environmental education is perceived as an on-going process of student awareness to and direct involvement

with the total life space environment; that is, the natural, social, and human phenomena existent within the context of a given geopolitical area.

Over the course of the past five school/project years the local ES project has utilized several different instructional strategies in an attempt to 1) affect student awareness of and attitudes about the total life space environment; 2) develop relationships between in-school instruction and the real world outside the classroom; and 3) provide the basis for a continuous, integrated and sequential EE curriculum.

Of all the strategies employed, i.e., classroom/field based lessons and units, field trips, guest speakers, nature walks, EE lab site studies, and weekend daytrips/overnight camping and hiking trips, it has been repeatedly found that the classroom/field based approach to EE awareness and instruction is most effective re: the above stated goals/objectives.

Since 1973 the ES project staff and local school system teachers have been involved in a process of program development; namely, the writing of a series of K-12 instructional

lessons/units applicable to both the classroom and the environment. As a result of this effort a series of one hundred and twenty-five Student Environmental Awareness (SEA) QUICK CARDS were developed and formed the basis of the instructional program.

The occassional enrichment of lesson/unit studies with guest speakers, field trips, nature walks, EE lab sites studies, and weekend daytrips/overnight camping and hiking trips provides a sound basis for exposing students to the environment(s) about them.

GOAL

For too long Man has been at odds with his environments - especially natural environments. In his incessant haste to develop and progress, as well as to dominate the world, man has created a state of *Man or Nature*. (See Diagram I) If this state of conflict is allow to continue both in the actions and minds of future generations then nature is doomed to its total submission to Man.

The local Student Environmental Awareness (SEA) program is attempting to reverse the *Man or Nature* trend by affecting

student attitudes and values about the interrelationship of *all* life space environments via their awareness of and direct exposure to/interaction with the total world about them. As a result of SEA activities it is hoped that a state of harmony will exist between *Man and Nature.* (See Diagram II)

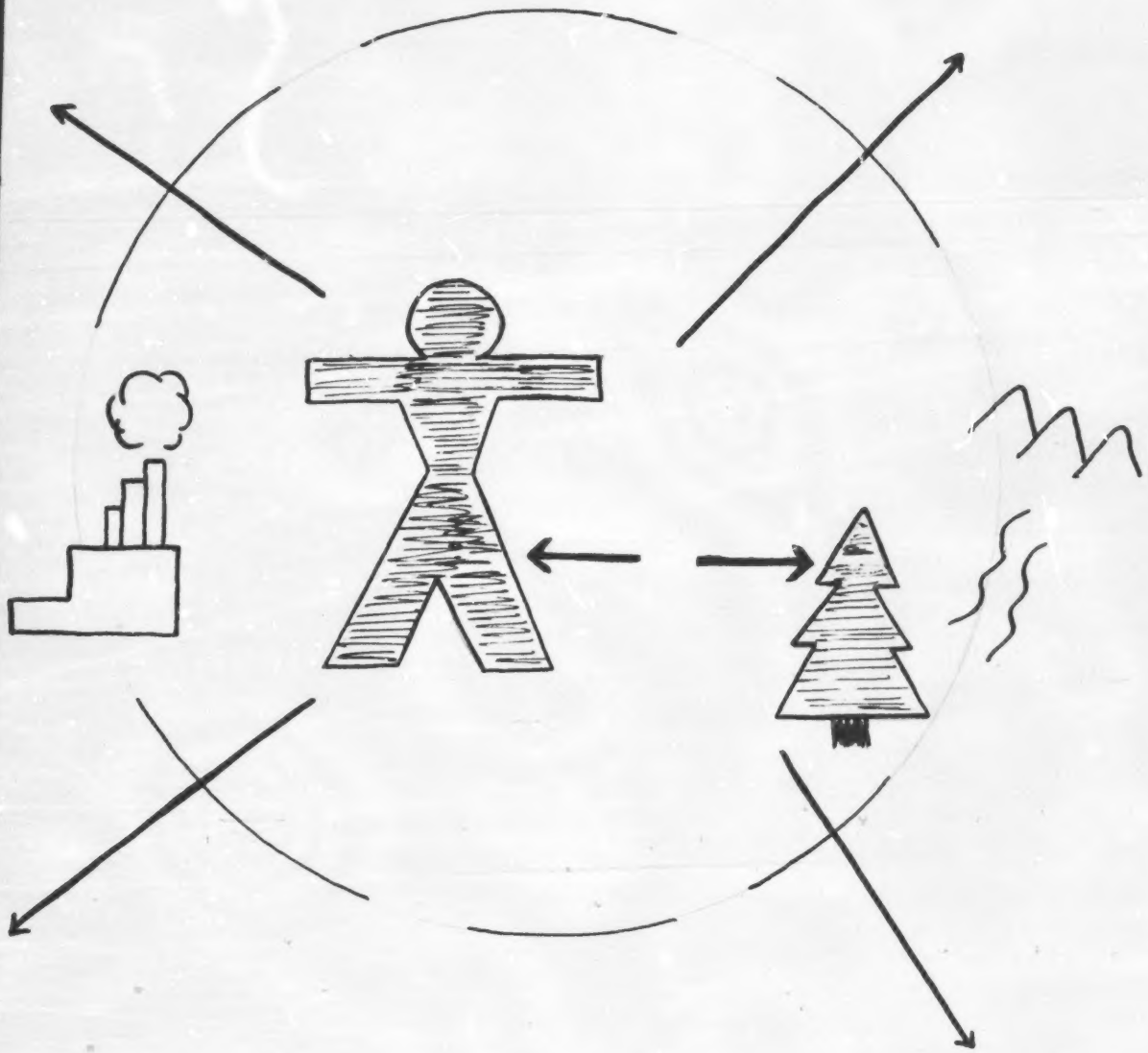

DIAGRAM I: *Man or Nature* - (movement away from areas of consensus)

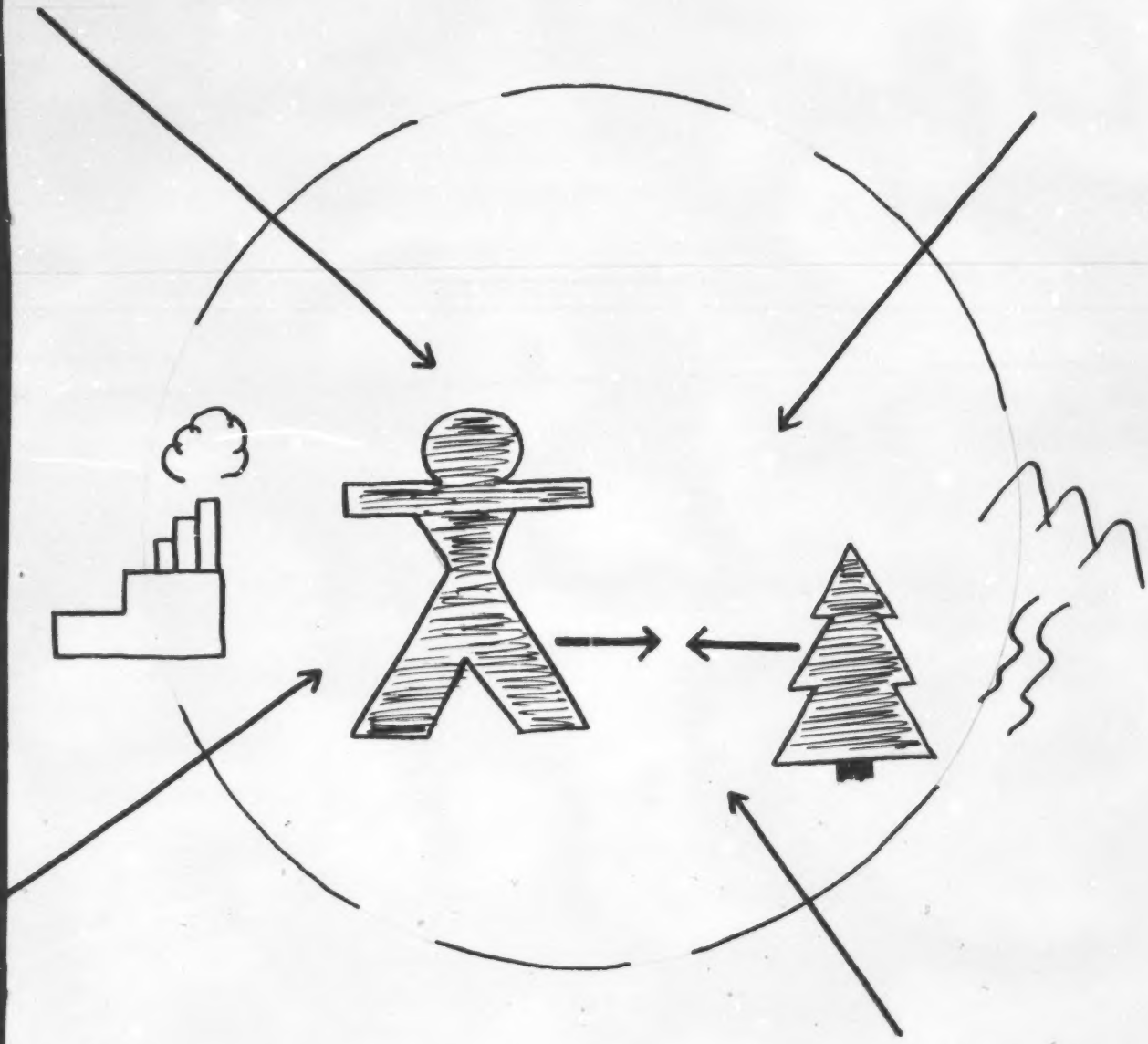

Diagram II: *Man* and *Nature* - (movement toward areas of consensus resulting in mutual betterment)